

Message Text

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13

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 OMB-01 SAM-01

DRC-01 /113 W

----- 037180

O R 301015Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBSSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3358

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4308

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, XF MILI

SUBJECT: CHIEF OF STAFF GUR--IDF MUST BE READY FOR
OFFENSIVE WAR OTPION

REF: TEL AVIV 4244

1. SUMMARY IN WAKE OF RECENT STATEMENTS BY RABIN, PERES
AND OTHER GOI LEADERS ABOUT DNAGER OFNEW WAR, COS GUR JULY 29
HAS STATED THAT IDF MUST MAINTIAN OPTION TO START WAR IF
POLITICAL SITUATION ARIES NECESSITATING SUCH A STEP. GUR
ANNOUNCED THAT IDF WAS INTENSIFYING PREPARATIONS FOR POSSIBLITY
OF RENEWED FIGHTING. END SUMMARY.

2. CHIEF OF STAFF MORDECHAI GUR, SPEAKING IN TEL AVIV JULY 29,
SAID THAT ISUTATION MIGHT DEVELOP TOWARD END OF YEAR IN WHICH
ARAB STATES MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO EXERCISE WAR OPTION (FBIS
TEL AVIV 291921Z JUL 74, ARAB LANGUAGE BROADCAST TO ARAB
WORLD). IF THERE WERE WAR IN NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS, GUR
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SAID, IT WOULD BE SIMILAR TO

OCTOBER WAR. IDF RETAINED BOTH OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE OPTIONS AND " A SITUATION IS MOST CERTAINLY POSSIBLE IN WHICH WE WOULD BEGIN THE CAMPAIGN." GUR FURTHER NOTED THAT THERE COULD BE EITHER FULL SCALE WAR OR MORE LIMITED FIGHTING SUCH AS TOOK PLACE DURING NEGOTIATIONS ON DISENGGEMENT WITH SYRIA AND EGYPT. WAR COULD TAKE PLACE ON SOUTHERN , NORTHERN OR EVEN EASTERN FRONT. SYRAI CONCEIVABLY COULD BEGIN HOSTILITIES ALONE.

3. GUR STRESSED THAT DECISION ON WHETHER TO START A WAR RESTED WITH GOVERNMENT, NOT WITH IDF, BUT ARMY'S STRUCTURE AND CHARACTER HAD TO ANSWER BOTH OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE REQUIREMENTS. IT WAS BY NO MEANS CLEAR THAT CHANGE IN GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION MEANT THAT ISRAEL WOULD NEVER IN THE FUTURE HAVE THE ATTACK OPTION--FOR POLITICAL SITUATIONS CHANGE. (JERUSALEM POST, JULY 30, OFFICIAL TEXT NOT AVAILABLE).

4. COS GUR IN JUNE HAD ALREADY ADDRESSED POSSIBILITY THAT IDF MIGHT HAVE TO EXERCISE OPTION OF STARTING WAR ON JUNE 25 HAARETZ CARRIED TEXT OF INTERVIEW ORIGINALLY APPEARING IN IDF MAGAZINE BAMACHANE IN WHICH GUR ASKED HOW HE WOULD ASSESS YOM KIPPUR WAR IN PERSPECTIVE OF NINE MONTHS WHICH HAD ELAPSED SINCE THEN, HE SAID, " WE MUST MAINTAIN THE OPTION TO OPEN WAR IF THE SKIES GET CLOUDY. THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR US, IT'S IMPORTANT FOR THE WORLD, IT'S IMPORTANT FOR OUR NEIGHBORS--THAT THEY SHOULD KNOW THAT THIS OPTION, BY WHICH WE WOULD START WAR PROVIDED CERTAIN CONDITIONS DEVELOPED, IS OPEN."

5. IN EFFORT TO DETERMINE WHETHER GUR'S VIEWS REPRESENTED CHANGE IN OFFICIAL GOI POLICY, MILITARY CORRESPONDENT STAFF SCHIFF (HAARETZ, JULY 29) ASKED GUR WHETHER CONCEPTION TO MAINTAIN WAR OPTION WAS RESULT OF NEW DECISION FOLLOWING OCTOBER WAR. GUR REPLIED, " I DON'T THINK THERE IS A NEW CONCEPTION. BECAUSE AT LEAST IN TALKS AMONG OURSELVES THE POSSIBILITY WAS NEVER OFF THE AGENDA. IT IS THE MOST NATURAL AND MOST NORMAL THING TO MAINTAIN ALL THE OPTIONS OPEN. IDF MUST BE BUILT FOR THIS OPTION ALSO. IT IS OUR DUTY TO BUILD THE ARMY IN SUCH A WAY THAT IF THE POLITICAL POSSIBILITY IS CREATED FOR US TO START WAR, WE SHALL HAVE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPTION. THE QUESTION IS CONFIDENTIAL

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HOW YOU DO CARRY IT OUT."

6. YEDYOT AHARNOT'S MILITARY CORRESPONDENT, IN FRONT PAGE ARTICLE JULY 30, WRITES THAT "IN FACE OF THE DANGER OF THE EXPECTED WAR IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, IDF IS ABOUT TO ADOPT A SERIES OF PREPARATORY STEPS INTENDED TO INCREASE PREPARATIONS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF RESUMPTION OF FIGHTING." AMONG THE STEPS REPORTEDLY TO BE ADOPTED ARE A) INCREASED CALLUPS FOR LONGER

MILITARY RESERVE SERVICE; B) MOBILIZATION EXERCISES INCLUDING SUDDEN CALLUPS OF RESERVISTS; C) EXTENSIVE FORTIFICATION EFFORTS ON EGYPTIAON, SYRIAN AND JORDAN EXPECTED FRNT LINES; D) SPEDING UP OF PLANS FOR SETTING UP OBSTACLES AND VARIOUS FORTIFICATIONS; E) LONGER WORKING HOURS FOR IDF; AND F) INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS AMONG IDF UNITS.

7. HATZOFI JULY 30 IN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "FULL PREPAREDNESS" NOTES THAT GUR'S STATEMENT, LIKE THOSE OF RABIN AND PERES, WAS INTENDED TO CREATE TENSION OF PREPAREDNESS AMONG THE POPULATION IN ANTICIPATION OF THE MOST SERIOUS POSSIBILITY. EDITORIAL ADVISED THAT ONLY NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT CAN CONFRONT SUCH AN EMERGENCY.

8. COMMENT: GUR'S STATEMENT'S ARE LATEST IN CONTINUING BARRAGE OF "WAR TALK" BY TOP GOI LEADERS. RELIABLE NEWSMAN (SCHIFF) HAS TOLD US THAT, UNLIKE GUR'S COMMENTS IN LATE JUNE (PARA4) HIS REMARKS OF YESTERDAY OBVIOUSLY HAD OFFICIAL GOI SNACTION.

9. ONE APPARENTLY WIDELY SHARED INTERPRETATION OF GUR'S EMPHASIS ON THE IDF HAVING A PREEMPTIVE OPTION IS THAT THIS WOULD REASSURE A CONCERNED ISRAELI PUBLIC STILL SMARTING UNDER THE WOUNDS INFLICTED BY THE ARAB SURPRISE ATTACKS ON OCT. 6. THIS ASSURANCE THAT THE IDF WOULD NOT AGAIN BE CAUGHT OFF GURAD PRESUMBALLY WILL STRENGTHEN THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION AT HOME AS ISRAEL FACES DECISIONS ON NEXT PHASES OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ARABS.

10. THIS INTERPRETATION OF GUR'S REMARKS IS THAT THEY ARE DESIGNED TO SUPPORT ISRAEL'S PEACE EFFORTS. WHATEVER THE INTENDED EFFECT IN ISRAEL, HOWEVER, SUCH COMMENTS CAN ONLY BE INTERPRETED IN ARAB WORLD AS MENACING AND PROVOCATIVE, THUS ENCOURAGING ANOTHER

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ROUND OF INFLATED MILITANT RHETORIC FROM ALL SIDES.
KEATING

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WAR, SPEECHES, MILITARY POLICIES, MILITARY CAPABILITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974TELAV04308
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740206-0755
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974075/aaaaador.tel
Line Count: 156
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: TEL AVIV 4244
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14-Aug-2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <24 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHIEF OF STAFF GUR--IDF MUST BE READY FOR OFFENSIVE WAR OTPION
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, MCAP, IS, XF, (GUR, MORDECHAI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005